

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed 4/4/2008 in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/23/2007 has been entered. The application is not in condition for allowance in view of the new grounds of rejection set forth below. Claims 4 and 7 are canceled. Claims 1-3, 5, and 6 are pending.

Drawings

The drawings were received on 30 January 2008. These drawings are acceptable.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-3, 5, and 6 objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 1, lines 14 and 15 "an outer" should be changed to --the outer--.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

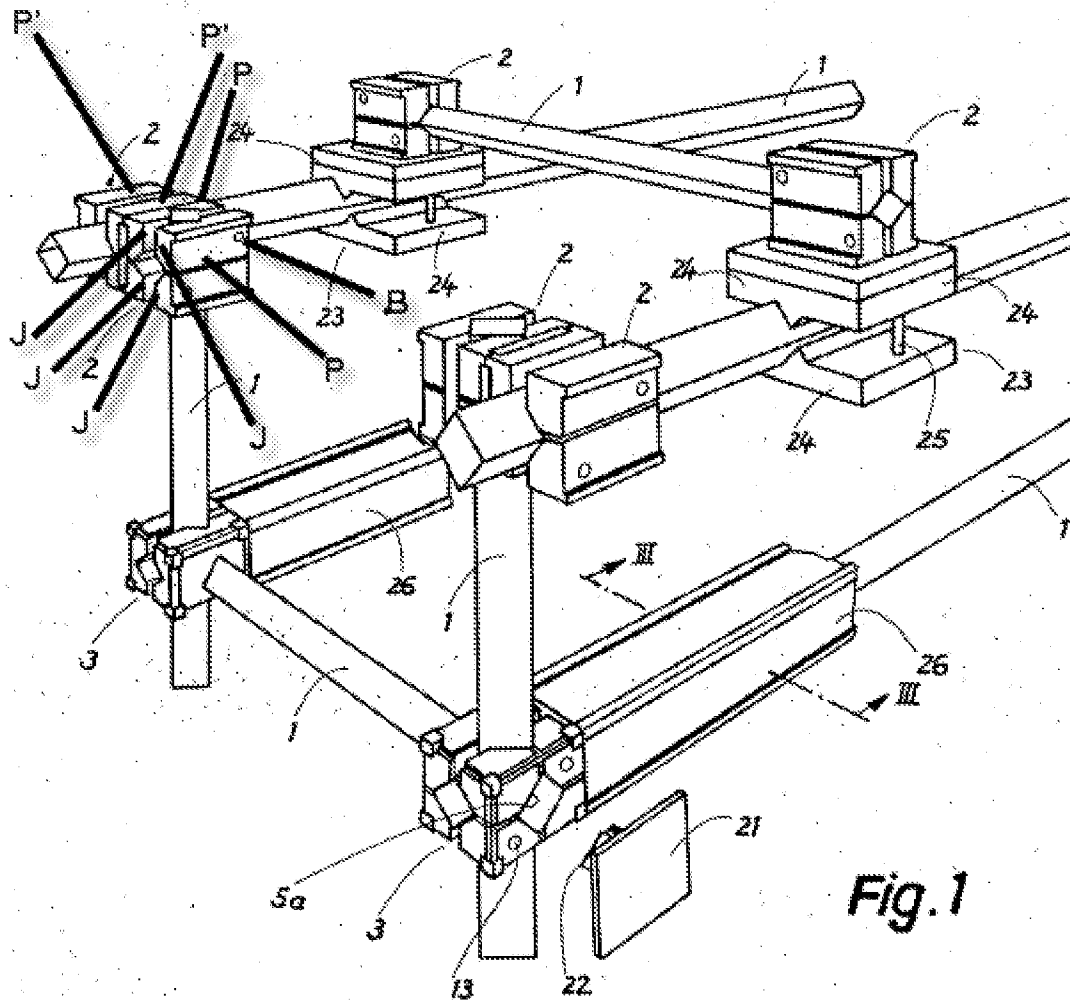
(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Patent DE 3736266 A1 Neff et al.

With respect to claim 1, Neff et al. disclose a system (Fig. 1) for detachable joining of at least first and second beams (1) of rectangular cross-section comprising for each said first beam (1) to be joined, a first pair of fixing plates (P) mountable on opposite sides of a said first beam (1) and fixable along said first beam by friction maintained by tightening bolts (B), each one of the fixing plates (P) comprising an inner surface adapted to face said first beam (1), and outer surface, which is adapted to face away from said first beam (1), for said second beam (1) to be joined, a second pair of fixing plates (P') mountable on opposite sides of said second beam (1) and fixable along said second beam by friction maintained by tightening bolts, each one of the fixing plates (P') comprising an inner surface adapted to face said second beam (1), and an outer surface, which is adapted to face away from said second beam (1), the outer surface of said first pair of fixing plates (P) being bearable against the outer surface of said second pair of fixing plates (P') when said first and second beams are arranged to be joined in perpendicular or parallel directions the relative positions of said first and second pairs of fixing plates (P, P') being fixed by locking elements (constituted by nuts not shown) in recesses in said outer surfaces of the said first and second fixing plates (P, P') said locking elements also anchoring the

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tightening bolts (B).

**Fig. 1**

With respect to claim 3, Neff et al. disclose (Fig. 1) that the each fixing plate (P, P') comprises projections (J) arranged at each corners of the fixing plate (P, P').

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

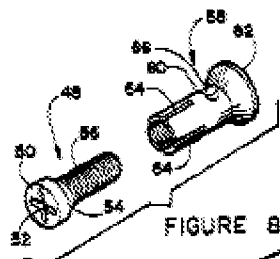
The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2, 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neff et al. as applied to claims 1 and 3 above, and further in view of US Patent No. 5,873,564 Bisch.

With respect to claims 2 and 6, Neff et al. fail to disclose that the locking elements are made of inner threaded sleeves; and wherein the sleeves have longitudinal slots. Bisch teaches a system (Fig. 8) including a tightening member is bolt (48); and a locking element (58) having a threaded sleeve (60) with a longitudinal slot (64). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to provide the system of Moss et al. with a bolt and threaded sleeve with a longitudinal slot as taught by Bisch in order to create a rigid connection between two members.



With respect to claim 5, Neff et al. fail to disclose the provision of wedges, extending from the projections, that are arranged to fix the position of the beams in a transverse direction in the friction joint to achieve a shape determined locking of the beams. The use of wedges is notoriously well known in the art per se to take up play between two members and provide a secure/tight connection between the two members and Official Notice of this is taken. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the projections of Neff et al. to provide them with wedges in order to take up any play between two plate members and ensure a tight fit even when receiving a beam with smaller cross-section.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-3, 5, and 6 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nahid Amiri whose telephone number is (571) 272-8113. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30-5:30. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571) 272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Nahid Amiri
Examiner
Art Unit 3679
June 1, 2008

/Daniel P. Stodola/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3679